

Greetings,

I hope this letter finds you well! My name is Emily Urban. I am a mid-twenties servant of Christ working in Sheboygan County through the Haven, a ministry of gospel-centered hospitality for young women seeking a fresh start.

July of 2016, a friend of mine came to me with a burden. One of her long time friends, 18 years old, was hitting rock bottom. She was struggling with a traumatic past, unhealthy home environment, and a host of health issues that continued to decline. She needed out. Without even realizing the words were coming out of my mouth, I said, "Send her here."

What originally started as one month turned into two and a half. In that time, she and I both grew and healed. God also brought another girl to me, same age, who was in a similar situation of struggle and hopelessness. Then another. And another. I only had one spare room in my apartment, though, so I could not give them a home to get on their feet.

The tricky situation with these girls is that they need independence, but do not have the resources nor the support to achieve that. Their environments and mental wellbeing both prevent them from freedom and force them into it.

A couple friends mentioned to me, "Have you thought about making this a ministry?"

I said yes to God.

And God ran with it. What started as theoretically looking at houses to know what I wanted years down the line turned into purchasing one that has proven more than perfect for the purpose of the ministry. Since then, only through word of mouth, over 10 women have come through, whether for an overnight stay or long term.

Recently, through trials of my own and with much prayer and consideration, I have left traditional employment to be home more for the women here. This letter is a request to consider supporting the Haven in this time to allow me to continue to work from home as a servant of the gospel to a greater degree.

I want to share a couple stories of what God has done with this ministry, because God is using it, and even I in my own doubts and dismissal of it as legitimate have come to see what others have been telling me for a very long time - this ministry is needed, it is important, and it needs support to operate to its fullest.

The most prominent and visible story is Tabitha (name changed). I met Tabitha over a year ago. In October of 2018, Lakeshore Technical College recognized the Haven as a reference for Tabitha when they saw she was struggling in her living situation. That was how we connected - they dug up my personal email in their records and reached out to me because they heard of what the Haven

was. Through the following several months of trials and difficult learning, she came to be baptized and a member of my own church.

One of those trials included becoming pregnant in a toxic relationship. Upon learning she was pregnant, the father pressured her to abort the child. She was considering it herself. During that time, she was in the behavioral health ward, and I made an effort to visit her every day after work and talk and pray with her. God blessed those efforts, and the prayers of the saints I shared Tabitha's struggles with, and so not only did we gain Tabitha as a member, but we gained her baby as a child of the church.

Additional moments with Tabitha have been breakthrough conversations on her relationship with God, counseling, general life advice with living independently, prayer, reading books together, spontaneous babysitting times as she has needed them, a trip to the ER with her to ensure her baby was in full health after a particularly difficult day, health-wise. Then, the following morning, I was able to watch her baby, make food for her, and generally help her recover after getting less than 4 hours of sleep.

Last year, a young woman who I unfortunately ended up having to evict, came into my path the same time Tabitha did. She was referred to me by an unbelieving friend who I was actively witnessing to at the time. My friend contacted me in a panic, saying this girl he knew texted him saying she had taken a bunch of pills and wanted to die. I instructed him to call 911 immediately, and met him at her house. I then followed the ambulance to the ER, and spent time with her as they prepared to pump her stomach. I returned the next day and offered her a place to live. She moved in. In that time, we combatted her anorexia, began healthy habits, saw health improve, and connected her with good community. Most of all, she heard the gospel for the first time. Sadly the eviction came as a result of her breaking a grave rule while I was away at work. However, she and I are still in contact and I am hoping that I will have more time to be intentional with her.

I have also been available to spontaneously serve other women in the community with hospitality and care. There are several other young women who I either regularly have gospel conversations with or even see in my home. I have also been able to organize events for outreach and host them. Support would allow me to do this to a greater degree.

It is also beneficial in my service to the church, directly. It has aided in my labor and spiritual health when leading in worship and is really the only reason I am able to participate in more church group activities, because I am not frantically trying to keep up with minimum labor at home and falling behind.

These moments would not have been possible if I were still fully employed. I reflect on moments in the past three years and wonder how much the ministry could have been enhanced in effectiveness, had I been home for some of the women who were struggling. Were it not for confidence in God's

sovereignty, I would regret not pushing for support sooner. I cannot even begin to communicate to you the day-to-day life in the Haven and the thousands of instances where God was clearly at work.

If you feel led to prayerfully support the Haven, there is a link on my website to send donations via PayPal, or you can also find an Amazon wishlist of needs we have. Prayer requests are updated on the blog monthly, as I can. If there are other ways you believe you can bless this ministry, please reach out to me at sheboyganhaven@gmail.com.

I am not a 501(c)3 and, with counsel, I do not intend to become one. My church is in the process of taking me on an official outreach ministry so that donors can receive a tax deduction. As it is, any donation to us is merely gift, which is appreciated more than you know.

As I write this, I am withholding much emotion. It is difficult to express gracefully the amount of not only passion and enthusiasm for the ministry, but an experience akin to grief that it has been this effective, but it cannot last unless the Lord provides. I trust He will. I am excited and hopeful. To God alone be the glory.

God bless,
Emily